

UPLIFTING ADOLESCENTS PROJECT

REPORT

LITERACY TRAINING PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JAMAL Foundation and the Uplifting Adolescents Project (UAP) have had a successful collaboration in the training of literacy facilitators in the NGOs supported by the UAP. A literacy-standard was developed to be the minimum criterion by which the performance of the NGOs would be measured in literacy teaching. Additionally three joint workshops in the appropriate psychology and methodology were held in which all the teachers of literacy were expected to participate.

This assessment was conducted in order to determine the extent to which the standard was being met by the NGOs through visiting seventeen (17) sites and conducting observations and interviews.

The results showed that 53% of the sites visited met the standard but only one significantly exceeded it. This points to the need for sustained training to ensure that the teachers (who are not specially trained in remedial education) develop their competency in the conduct of basic literacy classes.

It would also be useful to have increased collaboration between NGOs and also between the NGOs and the teachers colleges for improved delivery of the literacy programmes.

BACKGROUND

JAMAL Foundation (JAMAL) and the Uplifting adolescents Project (UAP) have collaborated on the training of persons in the NGOs who work in the delivery of basic literacy and remedial education. Three workshops were held for the teachers, which dealt with the appropriate methodologies in literacy and numeracy and the use of the materials as well as the relevant psychology of learning.

A standard of literacy teaching was developed which indicates the expected requirements of JAMAL and the UAP. This standard requires that the following five conditions be met:

- Testing be done of all participants before they begin classes so that their literacy levels may be determined and they be placed in the correct group from which they would maximally benefit. This would be in one of four levels as defined by JAMAL.
- The teachers have the minimum qualifications of four (4) G.C.E. or CXC subjects along with training in JAMAL's methodology. Ideally the teachers would be teachers' college trained and also trained in the methodology of JAMAL.
- The Basic Readers and Workbooks and the Numeracy texts of JAMAL be used at all levels as well as the supplementary readers as appropriate. Any other material used should be at the level and standard equivalent to that of JAMAL.

- The methods employed should conform to the training provided by the UAP and JAMAL.
- The teacher to student ratio should ideally be 1:10 but not more than 1:20.

STATEMENT OF WORK

The exercise was conducted in order to determine the extent to which the required standard was being met and consequently to determine which literacy instructors required additional training to improve the quality of their teaching and to enhance the capacity of the NGOs to deliver basic literacy training.

In order to do this, the five criteria of the literacy teaching standard was to be examined and the following done:

- 1) Establish the level of literacy testing of the UAP participants as done by the NGOs.
- 2) Determine the educational qualifications of the persons teaching the participants.
- 3) Review the instructional materials being used for appropriateness and determine the extent to which the basic materials of JAMAL were being used.
- 4) Review the instructional methodology being used.
- 5) Determine the teacher: student ratio that exists in the NGOs.

METHODOLOGY

The review was done by:

- 1) Designing a checklist of JAMAL/UAP standards with weighted scores.
- 2) Determining a score level that meets the minimum standard.
- 3) Designing an interview questionnaire to be administered on site.
- 4) Conducting site visits to sixteen (16) UAP sites where literacy teaching was being done across Jamaica.
 - a. Observing classes in session at the sites to determine to what extent the appropriate materials and methodology was being used as well as to make an assessment of teacher capability and student response.
 - b. Interviewing the site coordinators and the teachers to ascertain the methods of testing and the level of teacher qualifications that exists. Both observation and the interview were used to establish an assessment of teacher: student ratios.

Checklist

The list was made of the five (5) criteria to be considered with scores applied as follows:

Testing	10
Teacher Qualifications	30
Use of JAMAL Materials (or equivalent)	20
Use of JAMAL/ UAP Methods	20
Teacher/Student Ratio	<u>20</u> 100

Testing

All participants should be tested to determine their literacy levels before being placed in the appropriate group. This should be consistently done by a method that clearly places the participant in the appropriate level.

It was expected that the site supervisor or teacher be aware that testing need not be done in a written format only. During the interviews effort was made to ascertain the extent to which the teachers were clear about the reasons and methods of testing and how and why the participants were placed in the respective groups. It was also expected that the teachers would be able to clearly distinguish between the different levels.

Teacher Qualifications

In addition to the minimum qualification mentioned above, the teachers were expected to have been trained in literacy teaching, to at least the JAMAL standard and to have attended the three (3) JAMAL UAP workshops. The score was arrived at as follows, with a maximum possible score of 30 for teachers trained at college level, and 25 for “pre-trained” teachers:

College level teacher training	15
<u>or</u>	
Equivalent of 4 GEC/CXC subjects	10
Workshops attended	15 (5 for each one attended)

The mean of the scores of the individual teachers was taken to arrive at a score for the site. The difference between the “trained” and “pre-trained” teachers was no considered to be a very significant factor, since what mattered was the ability of the teacher to apply the relevant methodology, but it was expected that the “trained” teacher would have a slight edge over the “pre-trained” one.

Use of JAMAL materials

Both the questionnaire and observations were used to determine the extent to which the JAMAL readers and workbooks (or equivalent materials appropriate for the different levels), were being used, and a score out of twenty (20) applied.

JAMAL materials have been carefully developed for each literacy level and it was expected that any other material being used should be at least of similar standard.

Use of JAMAL UAP methods

Both the questionnaire and observation were used to determine the extent to which the methods taught in the workshops were being applied and a score out of twenty (20) applied.

Teacher/Student ratio

The ideal ratio is 1:10 with up to 1:20 being acceptable. A score of twenty (20) was given for the ideal situation and 0.5 subtracted for each participant over so that for a ratio of 1:20 a score of 15 (equivalent to 75%) would be obtained. Beyond that level 0.5 was subtracted for each participant up to a ratio of 1:30.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered during individual interviews. All aspects of the review were covered (see appendix).

Site visits

The sites were selected to cover from St. Thomas in the east to St. James in the west at a total of sixteen (16) sites. During these visits the classes were observed and the interviews conducted.

- a) During the observations assessment of the use of the materials and the methodology was made.
- b) The interviews gathered information on all aspects of the literacy programme.

Score Level

A score 75% was taken as the minimum for a site to meet the standard. This ought not to be regarded as a pass/fail evaluation because very good work was observed to be going on in all the NGOs, under a wide range of circumstances and conditions. It is also not expected that the scores will be used to make judgements on individual teachers. Instead, the scores will give an indication to the UAP the aspects of the programme that needs to be enhanced through training or other means.

RESULTS

The following table summarises the scores that were obtained.

Table of Literacy Standards Score

Site	Testing	Teacher Qualification	Use of JAMAL Material	Use of JAMAL-UAP Method	Teacher - Student ratio	Score	Meet Standard
	10	30	20	20	20	100	Y/N
JRC Yallahs	9	20	15	15	17 1:16	76	Y
YMCA Hope Rd.	9	22	15	10	10 1:34	66	N
KRC Highholborn	10	21	5	8	14 1:23	58	N
YWCA Spanish Town	6	13	18	15	13 1:24	65	N
Children First Spanish Town	9	20	18	18	10 1:30	75	Y
RFSO Denbigh	8	20	15	18	12 1:27	73	N
RFSO May Pen	9	30	15	18	10 1:32	82	Y
MNI Hannah Town	5	15	8	15	16 1:18	59	N
SPF St. Margaret's	7	10	8	10	10 1:32	45	N
JRC Central Village	9	12	18	18	20 1:10	77	Y
Fam Plan St. Ann's Bay	7	20	15	10	15 1:20	67	N
WCJF St. Ann's Bay	8	15	16	18	18 1:15	75	Y
WSUC Montego Bay	9	15	18	18	15 1:20	75	Y
SSTC Montego Bay	9	15	18	18	19 1:12	79	Y
Ashe	9	15	16	18	17 1:16	75	Y
TOTAL	8	17.5	14.5	14.5	14 1:22	70	Y=8 N=7

JAD Kingston	9	Specialist	Did not observe	Did not observe	20 1:8		
WCJF Mandeville	8	Did not observe	Did not observe	Did not observe	16 1:18		

The results show that 53% of the sites meet the required standard.

Some specific observations

JRC Yallahs

The programme is quite well organised and supervised and the teachers specialise in either literacy or numeracy, which allows for a good deal of individual attention. Good rapport exists between the teachers and participants.

Although the application of methodology was reasonably good, the students could benefit from more consistent use of the teaching aids and reinforcement materials and activities such as the completion of commonly used forms, writing of letters and reading of newspapers.

Because the class is located it benefits from the facilities of the school including classroom space and skills training.

Fluctuating attendance of the participants might be an issue, and some strategies should be put in place to attempt to motivate them attend with regularity.

YMCA Hope Road

This site has strong management. It is able to attract college students as volunteers. The volunteers are of great assistance in helping to create the situation for much individual attention and small-group work. Testing, grading and assignment to groups is methodical and efficient.

The main problem is overcrowding and distracting noise, with some classes so large that the teacher has great difficulty in keeping focussed. The volunteers are keen and enthusiastic, but most of them have not had the opportunity training and consequently the application of appropriate methodology is lacking.

This site is making valiant efforts to address the problems of 'at risk' youth and needs as much support as possible. It is situated at a central location, which makes it attractive to youngsters who will continue to seek its services. The name YMCA is also able to attract public support and therefore so long as there is the resource available it will continue to give hope and opportunity to the youth who it serves. Its proximity to teachers' colleges makes it possible for arrangements to be made for teachers-in-training to join the group of volunteers and thus strengthen its teaching base.

KRC Highholborn Street

This site is located in a 'tough' area and is making valiant efforts to address the issues that confront it. The teaching-staff appears to have a strong commitment to the cause.

The use of appropriate methodology and materials can be significantly improved. Both management and teachers require training. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on the selection and use of materials as well as classroom techniques.

This site has the potential to make very significant impact on the youth in the area. There is a library and computer laboratory which could be better employed in literacy education keeping in mind that the youngsters have to be taken from where they are and that initial expectations of them cannot be too high, but that they have to be guided along particular pathways.

It appears that in an effort to deal with the issues, including attendance and punctuality, the management imposes some rather strict rules and control mechanisms. The teachers also, appear to have a sense of insecurity of tenure apparently by performance demands being made upon them.

YWCA Spanish Town

The site is well coordinated and organised and benefits from the national organisation.

Methodology is the main issue and there seems to be some inconsistency in the testing of participants.

This site is also centrally located and is quite attractive to participants because of the range of activities that are done there.

Children First Spanish Town

This is a very vibrant and dynamic site where a great deal of learning is taking place. The enthusiasm and commitment of the management and teachers and the active learning of the participants makes this site a very interesting one. Volunteers assist in the classes. There was generally very good use of reinforcement tools such as games, role-play and flashcards. The JAMAL basic materials are used extensively.

There is an issue of overcrowding and quite cramped settings in some sections.

Many participants who have passed through the centre have returned to help and a system of on-going training could assist them to better.

RFSO Denbigh

Generally satisfactory work is being done at this site with appropriate methodology being applied. The class is in a well-organised and managed centre.

The literacy class that was seen could have benefited from a little more preparation of the learning materials. When the lesson has been planned the activities should be structured and arranged in order to achieve the outcomes expected.

RFSO May Pen

An obviously experienced and competent teacher, who clearly knows what she is about in literacy teaching, handles this group. The lesson was carefully planned and the reinforcement using the “post office” game effectively carried out and provided good opportunity for discussion and dialogue.

The class was too large but it was interesting to see how orderly effective learning was taking place.

MNI Hannah Town

Mel Nathan Institute conducts a wide range of activities and has the opportunity to integrate a great deal of literacy into the various activities and skills training programmes. The teacher at the Kingston Comprehensive High School site could be effectively used to assist in training of the other teachers.

There appears to be a level of inconsistency and lack of understanding on the part of the teachers of the testing process. The use of JAMAL or equivalent materials seems to be limited.

SPF St. Margaret's

The implementation of a feeding programme has resulted in very good attendance, reported to be up to 95%.

The issues here surround an apparent inconsistency in testing and application of methodology and materials. There is a high turnover of teachers and the lack of experience was evident in some classes. A system needs to be in place that allows new teachers to become familiar with all of the available materials.

JRC Central Village

This is a quite well run site with appropriate methodology being applied. Very good and easy rapport exists between the teacher and students. The quiet atmosphere and small group makes for an enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Fam Plan St. Ann's Bay

The participants appear to be eager and cooperative. The site conducts other training functions especially in the area of reproductive health and the integration of literacy into its programmes is useful.

The teacher could benefit from more planning, supervision and training as the lesson that was observed appeared to be lacking in structure and planning. There was a good teacher/student relationship that could be used to foster learning.

WCJF St. Ann's Bay

Good work is taking place at this site. The teachers and students were engaged in much painting, and talking about what was being done in a way to develop reading skills. The supervisor is very enthusiastic and has a good understanding of what is to be done in literacy education and plays a good supportive role.

There appears to be some inconsistency in testing and care should be taken in how quickly students are shifted from one activity to another with different concepts and expected outcomes.

WSUC Montego Bay

This is a well-managed site. The spread in teacher ability is somewhat wide. There is one very experienced and effective teacher and it could be useful for strategies to be put in place so that all the teachers could benefit from shared mutual expertise. It appears that there is effective handling of matters of discipline

SSTC Montego Bay

This site is different from all the others in that it is situated at the Teachers' College and benefits from a large number of enthusiastic teachers in training. The large numbers ensure that the class sizes are small and the level of supervision ensures that appropriate methodology is applied.

Ashe

The programme that is run by this group is very different from the conventional literacy class. It utilises a whole language approach incorporating music, dance and drama. In a class on phonics, for example, the letter sounds being taught were put in the form of a limerick accompanied by drumming and dance. This engaged the participants fully and is apparently an excellent motivator. There is

also very creative use of skits, role-play, games and song in other aspects of teaching (numeracy, reproductive health and social studies).

The syllabus takes a very practical approach where the concepts are taught with their direct application to daily life.

Testing is done for all participants. The reading material used is largely developed out of the language and experiences of the participants and this approach conforms with an aspect of JAMAL's methodology

JAD Kingston

On the visit to the School for the Deaf the class in session was a review of a dramatic presentation on video. Although it was an interesting experience, which demonstrated good student/teacher relationships, it did not allow for observation of literacy teaching. The areas of testing, teacher qualifications and ratio were satisfied and it would therefore mean that the site would be expected to meet the standard although no total score could be reached.

WCJF Mandeville

There was a misunderstanding in the making of the arrangements for this visit and as a result no literacy teacher or class was in session at the time of the visit.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although one-half of the sites examined met the standard, only one significantly exceeded it. This means that there is yet much more to be done in order to meet the expectations of the programme in which 'at risk' adolescents are given an opportunity to improve their chances in life and become productive citizens of society.

The UAP has been doing an excellent job in this regard and should only now be strengthened and given the resources to continue and to extend its work. It has the potential to make a very significant difference to the lives and hopes of the young people whom it serves and who otherwise would be subject to hopelessness.

To achieve this, the teachers in the NGOs need to be given the requisite training to do the job effectively. In order to meet the varied needs as identified by the review, regional training sessions could be arranged which would obviate the need for large all-island two or three-day residential seminars. JAMAL, as a national organisation, has locations in all parish capitals for which arrangements could be made to facilitate the sessions.

These sessions should concentrate on:

- Testing and placement of the participants into groups based upon their literacy levels
- Methodology
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Listening
 - Comprehension
 - Oral expression
 - Use of literacy materials
 - Teaching strategies
 - Reinforcement techniques
- Life Skills
 - Home
 - Community
 - Self
 - Work
- Psychology of the 'at risk' adolescent

In addition to direct training the NGOs could do well to

- Develop relationships with each other in order to share their expertise
- Develop relationships with the teachers' colleges to improve their volunteer base using teachers-in-training

- Ensure that curricular materials are available for the use of all the teachers
- Have mechanisms in place for regular interactions among teachers and supervisors in which teaching and learning experiences are shared in methods, techniques and approaches